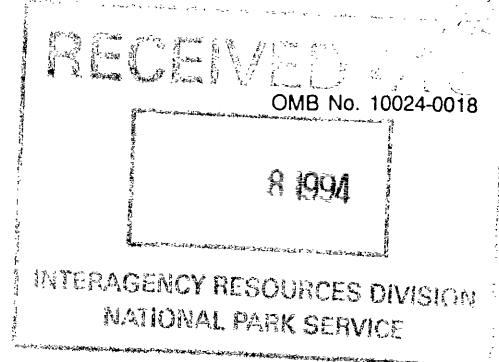


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Methodist Church Cemetery

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number West corner of the junction of South Aspen and West N/A not for publication
Congress Streets

city or town Lincolnton N/A vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Lincoln code 109 zip code 28092

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination
☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property
☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant
☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William S. Price SHPO
Signature of certifying official/Title

10-21-94
Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the
National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.
- ☐ removed from the National
Register.
- ☐ other, (explain:)

for
Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

Entered in the
National Register 12-14-94
Date of Action

Methodist Church Cemetery
Name of Property

Lincoln County, North Carolina
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)
☒ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
1		sites
11	2	structures
42		objects
54	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Historically and Architecturally Significant Churches and
Church-Related Cemeteries in Lincolnton, North Carolina 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY/cemetery

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY/cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A
walls N/A

roof N/A
other Stone
Iron

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Methodist Church Cemetery
Name of Property

Lincoln County, North Carolina
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☒ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☒ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Funerary Art

Exploration and Settlement

Ethnic Heritage

Period of Significance

ca. 1828-1944

Significant Dates

ca. 1828

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Methodist Church Cemetery
Name of Property

Lincoln County, North Carolina
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.62 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 7	4 7 6 7 4 0	3 9 2 4 7 6 0
Zone	Easting	North	ing

3			
Zone	Easting	North	ing

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Davyd Foard Hood
organization _____ date 16 July 1994
street & number Isinglass, 6907 Old Shelby Road telephone 704/462-4331
city or town Vale state N.C. zip code 28092

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

First United Methodist Church
name Mr. Randolph Sorrell, Chairman
Board of Trustees
street & number 201 East Main Street telephone 704/735-7489
city or town Lincolnton state N.C. zip code 28092

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Methodist Church Cemetery
Lincolnton, Lincoln County, North Carolina

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Methodist Church Cemetery
Architectural Description

The Methodist Church Cemetery, containing the marked graves of some two hundred and seventy-five members of the Methodist church, and/or citizens of Lincolnton, is a large block-sized burying ground with a mowed grass cover. The cemetery's position in the larger landscape of Lincolnton is marked by the towering grove of cedar and deciduous trees which stands near the center of the burying ground: individual volunteer trees--both cedar and deciduous--stand between the grove and the edges of the cemetery property and mostly shade the rear two-thirds of the cemetery. The front (South Aspen Street) third of the property, where the antebellum church stood until 1963, is mostly open and unshaded. Except for the trees and the grass cover, there is little other plant material ornamenting the landscape except for patches of periwinkle growing around the bases of trees and gravestones and under trees on the southeast and southwest edges of the cemetery and occasional narcissus bulbs.

The cemetery is located two blocks south of the public square in Lincolnton, the county seat of Lincoln County, on which the county court house has stood for over two hundred years. About midway between the cemetery and the court house, and on the east side of South Aspen Street, is the Old White Church Cemetery, the oldest public burying ground in the city of Lincolnton. With burials occurring here as early as 1828, the Methodist Church Cemetery, on the west side of South Aspen Street, is the second oldest public burial ground in the city. When the property here was acquired in the (1810s or) 1820s, the tract was bounded on the northeast by South Aspen Street, on the northwest by West Congress Street, on the southwest by Government Street, and on the southeast by an unknown and now wooded boundary.

From the 1820s until 1920, this property was also the site of worship services conducted by the Methodist Church of Lincolnton which, successively, had the names of Bethel Church and Trinity Church. A frame church, erected in the 1820s, was replaced by a brick church erected between 1856 and 1862. It was remodeled in 1896 and served the congregation until 1920 when it removed to a handsome Classical Revival-style church and renamed itself the First Methodist Church. Although the front, east corner of the church property had been taken by the construction of a railroad line in the 1880s, the most significant change in the boundaries of the church/cemetery property occurred in 1923. In that year the trustees, acting under the strong influence of the minister, sold the antebellum brick church together with the property at the front northeast end of their holdings here. This newly-created L-shaped lot occupied the entire 200-foot South Aspen Street front of the former church property. South Aspen Street, then US 321, was a busy thoroughfare in town and extended south to Gastonia. The new owner erected a brick filling station in the actual corner of South Aspen and West Congress Streets: it still stands, abandoned. In 1944 the

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Methodist Church Cemetery
Lincolnton, Lincoln County, North Carolina

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First Methodist Church reacquired the former church and the back half of the filling station lot. In 1963 the century-old church was demolished by a vote of the trustees and the site planted with grass and merged with the remainder of the cemetery.

The only significant change in the physical appearance of the cemetery since 1963 was the installation of a tall woven chain-link metal fence in the 1970s. It carries along the lines marking the four sides comprising the present boundaries of the cemetery tract. There is a gate entrance off West Congress Street. The church trustees erected the fence for security purposes, after sporadic acts of vandalism in the Old White Church Cemetery and at St. Luke's Episcopal Church. Because of the size of this tract and the fact that most of the graves are located in the larger center of the cemetery, mostly in from its edges, the fence has relatively little impact on the historic character of the burying ground. Were it not here, potential acts of vandalism might well have more significantly altered the historic character of the cemetery. The only real regret is that the marked graves of two African Americans, Robert Factory (d. 184?) and Caesar Reinhardt (ca. 1789-1859), stand outside the fence on the rear southwest edge of the burying ground. There are also field stones in the ground, immediately outside the fence, which appear to mark other graves. The fence here is covered with honeysuckle and vines: there is periwinkle escaping from the cemetery through the fence and down the embankment which carries along the rear, southwest property line along Government Street. Because of a shift in grade there is a brick retaining wall, with terra cotta tile copping, which carries outside the metal fence, at curbside, for about one-half the length of West Congress Street: the brick wall curves at the intersection with Government Street and then continues for a short distance down Government Street. It appears to have been erected in the 1970s or early 1980s.

The landscape of the Methodist Church Cemetery has the appearance of an open park with a grass cover punctuated by individual grave markers, paired stones, and clusters of gravestones. The ground cover is one continuous seam of green. There are no paths or driveways present nor are there any formal plantings of trees, shrubs, or other plant material. The only visible constructions in the cemetery are some dozen low, mostly cement, curbings which enclose family plots. They mostly date from the early twentieth century and are inobtrusive in their appearance and material. In most cases, as intended, they continue to enclose the graves of family members while in a few others, where the graves and their markers have been removed to Hollybrook Cemetery, they enclose grassy plots whose identations are reminders of earlier burials and an earlier purpose. The family plot (#18) of Elam Sharpe Caldwell is enclosed with a low rough granite curbing. It is the only plot enclosed with a material other than poured cement in the cemetery. There are also some fragmentary stretches of brickwork, mostly concealed in the grass, that appear to have been parts of enclosures. There is little development of family plots in this modestly-scaled

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Methodist Church Cemetery
Lincolnton, Lincoln County, North Carolina

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cemetery such as appear in the public and garden cemeteries of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

There are, however, three family plots (#1, #11-A, #32) which are set apart in the landscape of the cemetery. The most conspicuous of these is the former Bridges family plot (#32), a rectangular parcel, which is enclosed in a traditional turn-of-the-century cast iron fence manufactured by the Stewart Iron Works of Cincinnati, Ohio. "Bridges" appears on a metal panel in the near center of the gate opening into the enclosed, vacant plot: the name of the manufacturing company appears on a small shield above the name panel. The Bridges family plot is on the extreme northwest edge of the cemetery in the rear "third" of the cemetery. In the center "third" of the cemetery, shaded by a tall oak tree, and also located on the northwest West Congress Street edge of the burying ground, is a larger enclosure (#11-A) comprised of a low poured/cast cement curbing in which are set round metal pipe-like stanchions with metal ball finials at the corners and entrance. The oldest gravestone in this plot is the very handsome headstone of Martha Lander Fulenwider (1835-1855) (#12). It stands beside the white marble obelisk marking the later graves of her parents, the Reverend Samuel Lander (1792-1864) and Eliza Ann Schenck (1793-1875) (#11). This plot appears to be the Lander family plot; however, the Reverend William I. Langdon (1814-1859) (#10) is buried here as are others whose relationship to the Lander family is unconfirmed.

Situated in the near center of the unshaded, open front "third" of the cemetery is the fenced enclosure (#1) of a branch of the Sherrill family. It has a ground-level poured cement border in which are set pipe-like stanchions connected with horizontal members about one yard above ground level. These stanchions are the supports for a woven metal wire fence with a shallow decorative arched top. This fenced enclosure appears to date to the 1900s; the plot contains two monolithic granite headstones marking the graves of Barbara M. Henderson Sherrill (1834-1904) (#2) and Mary Helen Sherrill (1867-1907) (#3).

The gravestones in the Methodist Church Cemetery reflect funerary art and burial traditions which span the entire period of significance. The primary materials of the gravestones are white marble, a variegated white and gray marble, and grey granite. The use of colored granites is rare in the western Piedmont (outside Salisbury) during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries: the one significant example here is the black granite monolithic headstone of S. P. Sherrill (1834-1913) (#9). Field stones and quartz rocks were used to mark most of the graves of African Americans, whether slave or free men, in the rear "third" of the cemetery. The greater majority of the gravestones occur in the larger center of the cemetery with individual and paired markers nearer the edges of the burying ground. Although there appears to have been no formal design or historic platting of the cemetery, there are certain rhythms established by stones which were historically arranged in rows at the time of

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Methodist Church Cemetery
Lincolnton, Lincoln County, North Carolina

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burials. There are also certain family groupings in this cemetery which mark both the prominence of the family and the sad facts of high infant and childhood mortality in the nineteenth century. Among the important family groups are the gravestones of: Caleb F. Motz (1826-1895), his wife and four of their children (#6-7); the stones at the graves of Elam Sharpe Caldwell, his wife Elizabeth Motz and four of their children (#18); and eight gravestones marking the graves of the family of James E. Jenkins (1825-188?) (#41).

There are approximately 275 marked graves in the cemetery which cite the name of the deceased. In numerous cases at the turn of the century and the early-twentieth century, there is a single monolithic stone marking the graves of a husband and wife. Examples of this are the stones marking the graves of: John Cephas Quickel (1850-1905) and his wife Josephine Crouse (1852-1921) (#34); the similar stone of Dr. W. L. Crouse (1849-1900) and his wife Mattie Stowe (1852-1902) (#35); and the grey granite monolithic stone, with polished and plain surfaces and an inset Ionic pilaster, marking the grave of Mary Etta Mauney (1867-1915) (#8), the wife of J. A. Mauney (1863-1953). These stones represent a change in gravestone tradition away from the single stone for individual persons.

The series of historic gravestone forms represented by important, well-crafted examples in the Methodist Church Cemetery occur within the conventions of nineteenth and early-twentieth century funerary art. The earliest gravestone type is the tablet headstone marker and the earliest example is the white marble scroll top marker for Barbara Warlick Schenck (d. 1815) (#24) which was relocated here in 1875 from the Old White Church Cemetery. The earliest tablet-style marker erected in this cemetery also marks the earliest known burial here: it marks the grave of Reverend James Hill (d. 1828) (#25). The marker for William H. Cobb (d. 1839) (#31) also features a scroll top, whereas the later table marker for his wife Jane Cobb (d. 1841) (#30) features half- and quarter-circles which recall German decorative forms. The finest tablet-style gravestone in the cemetery marks the grave of Martha Schenck Fulenwider (1835-1855): its crossetted peaked top ornamented with acanthus leaves shares associations with Greek Revival style architecture of the period (#12). The nearby marker of Reverend William I. Langdon (1814-1859) also reflects the Greek Revival style (#10) as do numerous other tablet style markers of the 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s with peaked, segmental, or rounded arch tops and decorative block lettering.

The box tombs with ledger tops and obelisks also reflect associations with the Greek Revival movement in American cultural history and the continued influence of the ancient and classical world on funerary art. Three of the four box tombs with ledger tops in the Methodist Church Cemetery were erected in the 1830s. They mark the graves of Reverend James Richardson (1805-1833) (#19), his wife Catharine Richardson (1811-1835) (#20), and Susan Rebecca Bivins Schenck

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(1811-1837) (#21). The boxes supporting the Richardson ledgers were either rebuilt or substantially repaired in this century and are conjoined. Mrs. Schenck's intact box tomb is grey granite with a marble top. It surely was chosen by her husband Dr. David Warlick Schenck (1809-1861) whose grave is marked by a like box tomb with a white marble ledger carved and signed "Tiddy" (#22).

There are some half dozen significant obelisk-style monuments in the cemetery which reflect the two forms in which that style was rendered in the nineteenth century. One form features a stepped or pedestal base with a tapering square-in-plan obelisk as a dominant finial. Important examples of this style include the pair of unidentified vernacular granite obelisks (#17, #28) and the handsome costly white marble obelisk at the grave of Reverend Samuel Lander (1792-1864) and his wife Eliza Ann Schenck (1793-1875) (#11). A late-nineteenth century variant of this form is the squat marble obelisk with a finely carved urn finial at the grave of F. J. Jetton (1810-1896) (#13). A related gravestone, with an acorn finial, marks the grave of Blide Lutes (1901-1906) (#33). The second obelisk form represented in the cemetery features a stepped base with a columnar shaft: a fine example marks the grave of John Logan McLean (1837-1885) (#5). A related example stands at the grave of Lancelot Harris Marlin (1878-1880) (#4).

Occurrences of high style Victorian symbolism are relatively few in the cemetery. The most impressive is the marble marker at the grave of Claudie Rosever Cloniger (1908-1908) (#37) comprising a dead dove at the base of a tree trunk. Two unusual gravestone forms dating from the turn of the century occur in/near the Jetton family plot: both involve the use of an oval form. The graves of Annie Jetton (d. 1877) and Mary M. Alexander (d. 1901), the wives of Edgar James (who appears to be buried elsewhere), are marked by a granite stepped oval sarcophagus (#15): there is no other known stone of this form in Lincolnton. Nearby is the low oval iron fence-like railing (#16) at the grave of J. E. Cooper (d. 1906) which stands with a white marble headstone bearing Cooper's name.

Inventory List (Keyed to Site Map)

<u>Contributing Site</u>	1
Methodist Church Cemetery	
<u>Contributing Structures</u>	11
#1	Sherrill family fenced plot
#11A	Lander curbed and enclosed plot
#16	J. E. Cooper (d. 1906) iron oval grave enclosure

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Lincolnton, Lincoln County, North CarolinaSection number 7 Page 6

- #18 Elam Sharpe Caldwell granite-curbed family plot
- #19-#20 James (d. 1833) and Catherine Richardson (d. 1835) box tomb with ledgers
- #21 Susan Rebecca Schenck (1811-1837) box tomb with ledger
- #22 Dr. David Warlick Schenck (1809-1861) box tomb with ledger (signed "Tiddy")
- #26 Susanna Bivings (1789-1829), box tomb
- #32 Bridges family fenced plot
Collection of twelve poured cement plot enclosures

Noncontributing Objects

2

- 1970s woven wire metal security fence
- 1970s brick retaining wall

Contributing Objects

42

- #2 Barbara M. H. Sherrill (1834-1904) gravestone
- #3 Mary Helen Sherrill (1867-1907) gravestone
- #4 Lancelot Harris Martin (1878-1880) obelisk
- #5 John Logan McLean (1837-1885) obelisk
- #6 Caleb F. Motz family gravestones
- #7 Tillie Motz (1859-1863) gravestone (signed "Gaddess Bros.")
- #7A Guy Motz (1871-1872) gravestone
- #7B Marvin Motz (1877-1878) gravestone
- #8 Mary Etta Mauney (1867-1915) gravestone
- #9 S. P. Sherrill (1834-1913) gravestone
- #10 William I. Langdon (1814-1859) gravestone
- #11 Samuel Lander (1792-1864) obelisk
- #12 Martha Lander Fulenwider (1835-1855) gravestone (signed W. T. White")
- #13 F. J. Jetton (1810-1896) obelisk
- #14 Benedict Jetton (1779-1853) gravestone (signed "Tiddy")
- #15 Annie Jetton (d. 1877) and Mary M. Alexander James (d. 1901) gravestone
- #17 Vernacular granite obelisk
- #23 Michael Schenck (d. 1849) gravestone
- #24 Barbara Warlick Schenck (d. 1815) gravestone
- #25 James Hill (d. 1828) gravestone
- #27 Harriet Parker (d. 1859) gravestone (signed "Tiddy")
- #28 Vernacular granite obelisk (1862)
- #29 William W. Cobb (1820-1846) gravestone (signed "Tiddy")
- #30 Jane Cobb (d. 1841) gravestone
- #31 William H. Cobb (d. 1839) gravestone
- #33 Blide Lutes (1901-1906) obelisk

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Methodist Church Cemetery
Lincolnton, Lincoln County, North Carolina

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- #34 John Cephas Quickel (1850-1905) gravestone
- #35 W. L. Crouse (1849-1900) gravestone
- #36 J. R. Hawkins (1839-1876) gravestone (signed "Childs")
- #37 Claudie Rosever Cloniger(1908) gravestone
- #38 Willie Victory Lemaster (1867-1871) gravestone
- #39 Caesar Reinhardt (d. 1859) gravestone
- #40 Robert Factory (d. 184?) gravestone
- #41 James E. Jenkins family gravestones: James E. Jenkins (1854-1877) (signed "Carolina Marble Works")
- #42 Lottey J. Kelly (1892-1894) gravestone
- #42A Margaret Eliza Kelly (1864-1896) gravestone
- #43 Mary M. Davis (d. 1828) gravestone
- #44 Precious Hill (d. 1855) gravestone
- #45 Elizabeth H. McGilvray (ca. 1802-1843) gravestone
- #46 McDaniel family gravestone
- #47 Sophia Harry (1803-1831) ledger
- Collection of all other pre-1944 gravestones

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Methodist Church Cemetery
Lincolnton, Lincoln County, North Carolina

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Methodist Church Cemetery
Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

The Methodist Church Cemetery, a grass-covered park punctuated with marble and granite gravestones and marked in the larger town landscape by its grove of cedar and deciduous trees, is important in the history of Lincolnton for its collection of nineteenth and early-twentieth century gravestones and for its associations with the history of Lincolnton. The gravestones are important local examples of funerary art which represent the successive monument styles of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: a small number of stones represent the work of known stone carvers or marble yards including Gaddess Bros. of Baltimore; Tiddy of Lincolnton and Charlotte; W. T. White of Charleston, S.C.; Childs; and Carolina Marble Works, Lincolnton. The first known interment was that of the Reverend James Hill (d. 1828), minister of the Methodist congregation which acquired this property in the 1810s or 1820s and which worshipped here until 1920. During the period from 1828 until the late 1840s/early 1850s, when interments began in the St. Luke's Church, the Methodist Church Cemetery and the Old White Church Cemetery were the only public cemeteries in the town of Lincolnton. From ca. 1850 until the establishment of Hollybrook Cemetery in 1905, these three church-related burying grounds were the major public cemeteries in the town of Lincolnton and they have strong associations with the development of the county seat of Lincoln County. A cemetery used by African Americans at Second Presbyterian Church developed after 1885. As one of this quartet of church-related cemeteries, the Methodist Church Cemetery reflects the historical tradition and practice in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of churches providing places for the burial of the dead. This cemetery also includes the earliest intact group of known African American burials in Lincolnton.

The Methodist Church Cemetery satisfies Criteria A and C for listing in the National Register for its associations with the settlement and development of the town of Lincolnton in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and for its collection of gravestones which reflect the work of skilled craftsmen and the design traditions of funerary art during its period of significance. The Methodist Church Cemetery is eligible for listing in the National Register as defined in the Multiple Property Documentary Form "Historically and Architecturally Significant Churches and Church-Related Cemeteries in Lincolnton, North Carolina, Property Type III, Church-Related Cemeteries." The cemetery also satisfies Criteria Considerations A and D by virtue of its historical associations with the history and development of the town of Lincolnton and for its locally important collection of nineteenth and early-twentieth century gravestones and fences.

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Methodist Church Cemetery
Lincolnton, Lincoln County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 2

Historical Background

The early history of this property as a public burying ground held by the Methodist congregation of Lincolnton is fraught with the same uncertainties associated with the acquisition of the site by the congregation and its construction of a church on the property. To date, the original deed for the property, conveying it to either the congregation or trustees of the congregation, has not been located. According to church tradition, the year 1816 is the date for the organization of a Methodist church named Bethel which became the First United Methodist Church of Lincolnton. Like the town's other major Protestant congregations, Bethel Church was organized out of Methodist services first held in the union church, the Old White Church, erected by the town's Lutheran and Reformed congregations two blocks to the north on Aspen Street. The congregation's first church is said to have been begun by 1822 but this has not been confirmed. By the mid-1820s there was an active Methodist church in Lincolnton and services were held by the Reverend James Hill (ca. 1771-1828).

The first documented use of this property as a burying ground occurred in 1828 following the death of the Reverend Hill. James Hill died on 20 March 1828 and was interred on the church grounds. Whether he was the first person buried on this tract is unknown; however, later in 1828 and the years which followed there were a number of burials which established the place as a cemetery. On 11 October 1828, Mary M. Davis died at the age of twenty-three years. Her grave was marked by a stone (#43) with an inscription which reflects a version of an oft-employed verse on gravestones:

Come blooming youth as you pass by
On these lines do cast an eye
Once I did bloom as well as thee
Prepare for death, to follow me.

The next burial, marked by a surviving gravestone (#26), was that of Susanna Bivings (1789-1829) who died on 6 July 1829. Mrs. Bivings was the wife of James Bivings, one of the founders of Bethel Methodist Church and a leading businessman and prominent early industrialist in Lincolnton. Other deaths and interments occurred in the 1830s and down through the years of the nineteenth century. The number of burials in the cemetery declined after the establishment of Hollybrook Cemetery in 1905.

Whereas the cemetery at the union/Old White Church came to be broadly used as a public cemetery, it appears that this cemetery retained to itself something more of the character of a congregational burying ground. There are four nineteenth-century Methodist ministers (and their wives) buried here as well as the wives of four ministers who are buried elsewhere. Five years after Hill's interment,

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the Reverend James J. Richardson (1805-1833) died on 9 July 1833 and was buried here. His ministerial career was described on his gravestone (#19): "He laboured with success under the direction of the South Carolina Conference 4 years and 6 months." (The Lincolnton Methodist Church was in the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Church from the time of its founding until 1869 when the North Carolina Conference was established.) Two years later his wife Catherine Richardson (1811-1835) was buried (#20) beside him. In the antebellum period, Elizabeth H. McGilvray (ca. 1802-1843) (#45)--the wife of Rev. Mr. A. R. McGilvray, Precious Hill (d. 1855) (#44)--the wife of Reverend James Hill, and the Reverend William I. Langdon (1814-1859) (#10) were all buried in the Methodist Church Cemetery. The Reverend Samuel Lander (1792-1861) (#11) was buried in the first year of the Civil War: his widow Elizabeth Ann Schenck Lander (1793-1875) was later interred beside him. In that same decade, the 1870s, Elmira J. Lee (d. 1871)--the wife of the Reverend W. D Lee--and her daughter were buried here as was Rose A. Russell (1846-1879)--the wife of the Rev. R. D. Russell--and their daughter Nancy J. A Russell (1861-1880). Elizabeth Schenck McDaniel (1804-1887), the daughter of Michael Schenck and the wife of Reverend Daniel Cowar McDaniel, was also buried here as are her five daughters (#46).

There also is an unknown number of African American interments here, most of which are marked by field stones or quartz rocks: these occur in the western end of the burying ground. Two of the marked graves are those of Caesar Reinhardt (d. 1859) (#39) and Robert Factory (d. 184?) (#40). At present it is unclear when these interments began and when they ended. It appears, however, that this cemetery includes the earliest intact group of African American burials in Lincolnton: (earlier and) contemporary African American burials in the Old White Church Cemetery were relocated within that cemetery in 1951.

The tract which survives as the Methodist Church Cemetery was also the site of Lincolnton's Methodist churches and religious worship from ca. 1822 until 1920 when the congregation moved into the Classical Revival-style building on East Main Street. According to tradition the first church building was a frame structure which stood about 100 feet west of the South Aspen Street front of the church property. There are graves in that area, now also marked by cedar trees, from the later years of the nineteenth century. The congregation's next house of worship was erected late in the antebellum period. Mrs. Frank Hull Crowell, in her unpublished typescript church history, gives 27 March 1856 as the date on which construction began and 1862 as the completion date: she did not cite the authority for those statements. That brick building was erected on the north side of the first church and near the church property boundary on West Congress Street. Remodeled in 1896, that church served the congregation until its move to the present church in 1920: it stood until it was razed by the congregation in 1963.

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During the second half of the nineteenth century the churchyard continued to be the site of interments for church members and others. In February 1875, David Schenck, functioning as the head of the Schenck family, had the remains of his grandparents, Michael (ca. 1771-1849) and his wife Barbara Warlick (1782-1815), taken up in the Old White Church Cemetery and relocated with their gravestones (#23, #24) to the Methodist Church Cemetery.

In the first decades of the twentieth century the pattern of burials in the cemetery, the appearance of the church yard, and the occupation of the site as a place of worship underwent significant changes. The first major influence in the sequence of events was the establishment of a public cemetery by the town of Lincolnton: this came as a result of the pressing need for a public burying ground in the growing town. Hollybrook Cemetery was established and laid out in 1905 in the northeast section of Lincolnton, on a large tract which lay behind and north of the African American Second Presbyterian Church. At some point after 1905--and probably after 1915, a number of graves in the Methodist Church Cemetery were taken up and relocated to the new public cemetery. The few vacant enclosures--and now purposeless cement and stone curbing--in the cemetery are testimony to those events. While the new cemetery and its assurances of perpetual care were an attraction, it seems likely that the most pressing influence on the decision to relocate graves to the public cemetery was the congregational decision in 1915 to build a new church on a new site. A committee was appointed in 1915 to acquire a new site and lay plans for erecting a new building.

A review of the burials included in a manuscript cemetery roster, also prepared by Mrs. Frank Hull Crowell, in 1963, indicates an uninterrupted series of burials in the 1900s and early 1910s; however, the decision to relocate in 1915 clearly influenced a steep decline in the number of burials. After 1905 and more so after 1915, there are virtually no known (marked) burials in the cemetery which are not those of a spouse or child being interred beside a loved one. The decline in burials is even more precipitous after 1920 when the congregation removed to their new house of worship on East Main Street. The final known interment in the cemetery occurred after the death of J. A Mauney (1863-1953) on 7 July 1953: he was buried beside his wife Mary Etta Mauney (1867-1915) who had died on 14 May 1915.

The completion of the handsome new church on East Main Street and the removal there in 1920 was to have a serious impact on the fortunes of the Methodist Church Cemetery. However, a second decision by the congregation's trustees in 1923 was equally critical. At the urging of the then minister, the church trustees sold the antebellum brick church and the South Aspen Street frontage of the historic church/cemetery property to E. A Huffstetler for \$3,500: the deed is dated 20 July 1923. The rear of the lot, on which the church cemetery was located, was retained by the congregation. After Huffstetler acquired the

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property he erected a small filling station in the front of the lot and close to the streets at the corner of South Aspen and West Congress Streets. The antebellum former church building was leased for use by a foundry.

On 14 April 1944, for reasons that are now unclear, the First Methodist Church decided to reacquire its former church and a part of the acreage it had sold in 1923: the purchase price was \$2,600. Thus the church building and the land on which the cemetery were located were again legally joined under the ownership of the First Methodist Church. The church continued to lease the building: the Thornburg Machine Company occupied the former church for many years. The Aspen Street front of the former church holding, together with the filling station, remained, and remains, in private hands as a commercial property.

In 1963 the official board of First Methodist Church voted to demolish their former antebellum church building and it was subsequently pulled down. The site of the church was planted with grass and the site was effectively merged with the grass cover of the church cemetery. In the years since 1963 the only significant action taken on the part of the First United Methodist Church has been to erect a woven-wire/chain link metal fence, topped by three strands of barbed wire, around the cemetery for security purposes. There has been minimal visible intentional vandalism to the church cemetery.

Community Planning and Development

The Methodist Church Cemetery, the second oldest public cemetery in Lincolnton, is important in the history of Lincolnton for its associations with the nineteenth century history of the county seat. The Lincolnton Methodist congregation, like many others throughout the small towns and rural areas of North Carolina and the South, felt a responsibility, as Christians, for providing a place for the burial of the dead. Although the original deed for this land on which the Methodists worshipped and interred persons has not been found, the language of the earlier (1788) deed by which the town's Lutheran and Reformed congregations acquired church property made it clear that the provision for a place for the burial of the dead was a responsibility they accepted and acknowledged. The Lincolnton Methodist congregation, then known as Bethel Church, followed the example of their Lutheran and Reformed brethren, and likewise gave over their churchyard for the burial of church members and citizens of Lincolnton. The first person known to have been buried in the churchyard was the Reverend James Hill (ca. 1771-1828) the church's pastor. Other interments followed within the year and continued steadily for another ninety years.

For the period from ca. 1828 until the 1840s, this cemetery was one of only two cemeteries in the town of Lincolnton. After St. Luke's Episcopal Church was organized in 1841, land was acquired, and a church was built in 1842, it, too,

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set aside a part of its churchyard as a public burying ground. Thus, these three church-related cemeteries, located on property that was also the site of the congregation's church, were the only public burying grounds in Lincolnton until 1905 when the town of Lincolnton established Hollybrook Cemetery. After the construction of the Second Presbyterian Church in 1885, some African American members of that church were interred in the back of the church lot. Consequently, these church-related cemeteries represent the close relationship between religious life and concepts of Christian burial and civil responsibility which characterized social history in nineteenth century Lincolnton, Lincoln County, and North Carolina. This relationship remained intact through much of the nineteenth century and in many parts of the state and until the garden and public cemetery movement resulted in the creation of public or municipal cemeteries in the later-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The Gravestones of the Methodist Church Cemetery

The gravestones in the Methodist Church Cemetery reflect the skilled craftsmanship of both known stone carvers and marble yards who signed a number of stones, and the many now anonymous stone carvers who supplied gravestones to hundreds of Lincolntonians in the nineteenth century. The forms, design, lettering, and inscriptions on the surviving gravestones in the cemetery represent and reflect the succession of styles associated with funerary art in the nineteenth and early centuries. Here as in the Old White Church Cemetery, the predominant stone form is the tablet. The gravestone (#25) of the Reverend James Hill (d. 1828), the earliest known grave marker in the cemetery, has a scroll-top typical of the late-Baroque style stones of the eighteenth century. In the mid-century, the tops of stones were finished with peaked for segmental arched shapes like the stone (#29) of William W. Cobb (1820-1846). Stylistically, the most sophisticated gravestone in the cemetery is the handsome Greek Revival style tablet headstone (#12) at the grave of Martha Fulenwider (1835-1855), the wife of E. M. Fulenwider, the daughter of the Reverend Samuel and Eliza Schenck Lander, and the granddaughter of the important early-nineteenth century Lincolnton industrialist Michael Schenck. Carved by W. T. White of Charleston, South Carolina, the tall, slender, elegant white marble tablet has a peaked, crossetted top finished with carved acanthus leaves. The inscription is carved in a high relief tablet which appears to be superimposed on the stone.

The tablet headstone (#38) marking the grave of Willie Victory Lemasters (1867-1871) is typical of those erected here in the later decades of the nineteenth century. It is a simple tablet form with a curved top. An inset circle at the top of the stone is carved with a bouquet of flowers. Sentiment and metaphor were important aspects of gravestone design in the nineteenth century and they were represented in many ways. The deaths of children and young wives in childbirth often resulted in stones with inscriptions which

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denoted attitudes of grief and loss. One small lad's stone has the evocative phrase "OUR BOY" carved into the slanted top of a stone, while the grave of Lancelot Harris Martin (1878-1880) is marked by a white and gray variegated marble obelisk (#4) with the inscription "In Memory of Our Little Darling." Tree stumps with cut limbs symbolizing a life cut short by death were common in cemeteries of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the Methodist Church Cemetery, the gravestone of Claudie Rosever Cloniger (1908) (#37) features such a cut-limb tree stump with the added element of a lifeless dove at its base. Two Kelly family gravestones from the mid-1890s are also rich in symbolism. The gravestone (#42) of Lotte J. Kelly (1892-1894) features a carved hand in the upper panel with a finger pointing heavenward. The gravestone (#42A) of (her mother?) Margaret Eliza Kelly (1864-1896), features a pair of clasped hands: the female hand, representing that of Mrs. Kelly, is embraced by the hand of God.

The ledger gravestone form, elevated on a box tomb, is represented by five important examples in the cemetery which mark the graves of citizens of high social status. Four date from the 1830s and the fifth from 1867. The earliest ledger (#45) marks the grave of Sophia Harry (1803-1831). Flanking it are two panels--one inscribed to the memory of "Our Infant Twins" which might have once formed part of a box tomb base for the ledger. The ledgers (#19 and #20) at the graves of the Reverend James Richardson (1805-1833) and his wife Catharine Richardson (1811-1835) are also important for their inscriptions. Mr. Richardson's stone bears the wording "Born June 22, 1805, born again January 8, 1827." Mrs. Richardson's stone is inscribed "Born Jan. 18, 1811 and in October 1827, born again, Departed this life October 27, 1835." These indications of a renewal of Christian life are believed to be relatively rare for their period. When Susan Rebecca Schenck (1811-1837) died her husband Dr. David Warlick Schenck (1809-1861) erected a box tomb (#21) over her grave and covered it with a ledger stone. When he died on Boxing Day, 1861, his grave was likewise marked by a box tomb (#22) with a white marble ledger carved by "Tiddy."

The obelisk form, popular in the mid-nineteenth century and continued in use into the early twentieth century, is rendered in several forms in the Methodist Church Cemetery. The white marble obelisk (#11) on a granite base at the grave of the Reverend Samuel Lander (1792-1864) has a linear stylishness associated with handsome Greek Revival architecture of the mid-nineteenth century. There are two impressive obelisk-form gravestones which have columnar forms at the top rather than the usual tapering square-in-plan shaft. These mark the graves of John Logan McLean (1837-1885) (#5) and F. J. Jetton (1810-1896) (#13): the Jetton stone is crowned by an urn. There are also two other impressive vernacular granite obelisks in the cemetery which, culturally, are perhaps more important than the stylish examples here-mentioned. One (#17) is a two-part stone with a squat square-in-plan tapering obelisk rising from a low

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base. An inset panel which carried the name of the deceased is lost from the stone. The second example (#28) which is clearly by the same hand has a like, but shorter obelisk on a two-part granite base: the identification panel survives but is virtually unreadable: the death date of "11 May 1862" can be read.

For the most part, the gravestones of the early twentieth century are conventional in their design, form, and materials. One example, a two-part marker, however, is exceptional and of a totally unique character in Lincolnton and probably Lincoln County. One part of the monument is a conventional footstone-type marker which is inscribed "J. E. Cooper. Died 1906. Age 24." It stands at the top of a low oval fence-like iron enclosure (#16) which, functionally, protects the actual gravestone from pedestrian rambling.

Five stone carvers and marble yards are represented by surviving signed stones in the Methodist Church Cemetery. Most of these stones date from the middle decades of the nineteenth century. At least three of the stones reflect the practice by early nineteenth century Lincolntonians--and North Carolinians, in general--of obtaining handsomely-designed and finely-executed gravestones from important centers of culture and trade in the United States. Because of the trade routes established with Charleston factors and merchants, Charleston's stone carvers, particularly the White family, were frequently sought out for important commissions. The earliest known stone in the Methodist Church Cemetery which came from Charleston is the tablet-style headstone (#24) of Barbara Warlick Schenck (1782-1815). It was originally placed at her grave in the Old White Church Cemetery in 1815; however, in 1875, that stone and the similar tablet-style marker (#23) at the grave of her husband Michael Schenck (ca. 1771-1849) were removed, with their remains, to the Methodist Church Cemetery by their grandson, North Carolina Supreme Court Justice David Schenck. In his Historical Sketch of the Schenck and Bevens Families he wrote of his action.

The tombstone which marks my grandmother's grave was purchased in December 1815 by Peter Summey (a Lincolnton merchant), who was selling goods at that time in Charleston, South Carolina, as I learn by a letter from him to my grandfather, December 10, 1815, now in my possession. This tombstone, I am informed by my aunt, Mrs. (Elizabeth Schenck) McDaniel, was the first marble monument erected in Lincolnton.

David Schenck noted that he relocated these gravestones in the Methodist burying ground because of the great affection his grandfather had for the Methodist church. They were placed beside the grave of their son Dr. David Warlick Schenck (1809-1861). The maker of the Barbara Warlick Schenck headstone is not known; however, W. T. White of Charleston, South Carolina, provided the handsome tablet-style marker (#12) erected at the grave of Mrs. Schenck's graddaughter

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Martha Lander Fulenwider (1835-1855); she was the daughter of the Reverend Samuel Lander and Eliza Schenck.

Prominent North Carolina planters and citizens in the antebellum period often turned to points further north for gravestones to mark the graves of loved ones. Marble yards in Petersburg supplied many stones as did the yards in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York. One of the most prominent marble yards in Baltimore was that operated by the Gaddess brothers. When Tillie Motz (1859-1863) died, her parents Caleb F. (1826-1895) and Emeline A. Motz (1842-1903) ordered a small white marble stone (#7), ornamented with lily-of-the-valley to mark the grave of their first-born child. It is signed "Gaddess Bros, Balt." Later, in the 1870s, Gaddess Brothers or a local yard produced like monuments for Guy Motz (1871-1872) (#7A) and his brother Marvin Motz (1877-1878) (#7B). Those three stones stand beside each other in a row with the stones marking the graves of their parents.

There are four important surviving antebellum gravestones in the Methodist Church Cemetery which are signed by "Tiddy" which represent the workshops maintained by Englishmen Richard and William Tiddy: they had marble yards in both Lincolnton and Charlotte which were prolific in the antebellum period. The tablet-style headstones of William W. Cobb (1820-1846) (#29) and Harriett Parker (#27) (d. 1859) have a segmentally-arched top and are representative of the period. The headstone of Benedict Jetton (1779-1853) (#14) has a rounded arch top with an inset circle holding a triangle with the three words "Love, Purity, Fidelity" carved along the three sides of the triangle. The ledger stone on the box tomb (#22) of Dr. David Warlick Schenck (1809-1861) is one of the very few known ledger stones crafted and signed "Tiddy" that exist in the Piedmont.

The white marble tablet-style headstone (#36) of J. R. Hawkins (1839-1876), crafted and signed by "Childs" has a more fully rounded top. As might be expected, there are relatively few signed stones by local (Lincolnton) stone yards of the later nineteenth century. The simple tablet style stone of James Jenkins (1854-1877) (#41) is signed "Carolina Marble Works, Lincolnton, N. C." and is representative of the typical headstone of the period. It consists of the white marble table which is set in a granite base. Whether this combination of marble and granite was a matter of economy or a common practice is uncertain; however, in more conspicuous gravestone designs granite was often used as the below ground, or first above-ground stage of monuments.

The Fences of the Methodist Church Cemetery

Cast iron or metal fences were a very common feature of nineteenth century cemeteries in North Carolina and those which survive to the present are usually in church-related cemeteries where they are less-often subject to vandalism or theft. There are two metal-fenced family plots in the cemetery which are

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important examples of their type in Lincolnton. They are, in fact, the only examples of their type to survive in any of the three church-related burying grounds. There are no surviving fences of any type in the Old White Church Cemetery and whether there were originally is unknown. The cemetery adjoining St. Luke's Episcopal Church has two important and impressive mid-nineteenth century cast-iron fences enclosing the adjoining Ramsour and Phifer family plots. The two fenced plots in this cemetery appear to date from the turn-of-the-century. The fence (#32) enclosing the now-vacant Bridges family plot, along the West Congress Street edge of the cemetery, was manufactured by the Stewart Iron Works of Cincinnati, Ohio, whose identifying shield and the name "Bridges" appear on the enclosure gate. The fencing is the typical turn-of-the-century type with round vertical uprights carried between top and bottom rails and like corner posts. The top of the fence is finished with rounded sections, connecting two uprights, enclosing the fleur-de-lis top of a center upright. It appears from indentations that the graves which were once located here have been removed (and probably to the Hollybrook Cemetery). The second fenced family plot (#1) features round pipe-like stanchions and top rails with finished caps on which is carried a simply-patterned woven wire fence with an arched top. It encloses the Sherrill family plot containing the graves of Barbara M. Henderson Sherrill (1834-1904) and Mary Helen Sherrill (1867-1907). There are two additional structures that function as fences to enclose graves although they are not fences in the conventional sense. The plot (#11A) containing the graves of Martha Fulenwider, Reverend Samuel Lander, Reverend William I. Langdon, and S. P. Sherrill has a tallish poured cement curbing in which are set lengths of round pipe which are connected with horizontal pipes and finished with ball finials. The low oval iron pipe-like railing (#16) at the grave of J. F. Cooper (d. 1906) functions as a fence to protect this one grave.

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9. Major Bibliographic References

Crowell, Mrs. Frank Hull, "Historical Sketch of the First United Methodist Church, Lincolnton, North Carolina," unpublished typescript manuscript prepared in 1963. A copy exists in the office of the First United Methodist Church, Lincolnton, North Carolina.

Crowell, Mrs. Frank Hull, "Manuscript List of Burials in the Methodist Church Cemetery," unpublished manuscript list prepared in 1967 and revised in alphabetical form in 1989. A copy exists in the office of the First United Methodist Church, Lincolnton, North Carolina.

Hood, Davyd Foard, Field notes of a survey of the Methodist Church Cemetery conducted on 15-16 February 1994. Original notes in the possession of the author.

Lincoln County Deeds, Office of the Register of Deeds, Lincoln County Court House, Lincolnton, North Carolina.

Schenck, David. Historical Sketch of the Schenck and Bevens Families. Greensboro, North Carolina: Thomas, Reece & Co., 1884.

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10. Geographical Data

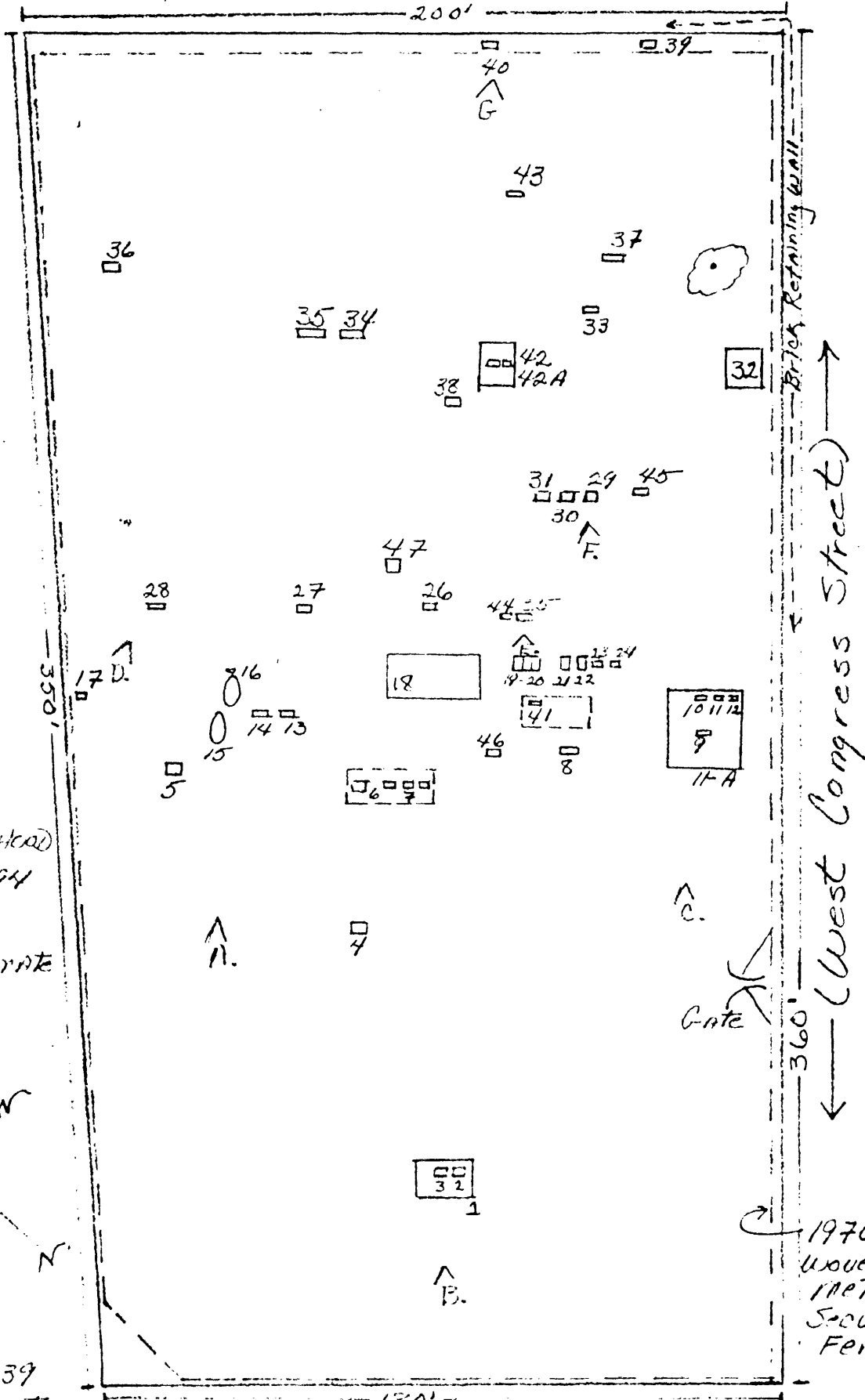
Verbal Boundary Description

The property included in this nomination is parcel #2839 on Lincoln County Tax Map 3623 -16-82

Boundary Justification

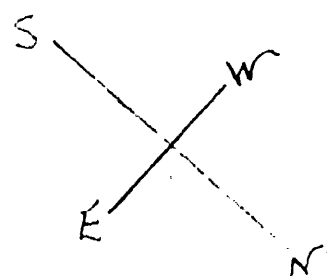
The boundaries for the property included in this nomination comprise and enclose the residual acreage (1.62 acres) of the larger tract acquired in the 1810s or 1820s by the Lincolnton Methodist congregation. These boundaries enclose all the property owned by the Methodist Church which was used as a cemetery at this location. These boundaries reflect the changes in the acreage wrought by the sale of a portion of the church lands here in 1923 and the repurchase of a portion of those lands in 1944. There has been no change to the boundaries of the Methodist Church Cemetery since 1944.

← (Government Street) →



DAVID FORD HOOD
11 August 1994

Scale is Approximate



Lot #2839
Lincoln County
TAX MAP 3623-16-82

Methodist Church Cemetery
Lincolnton, North Carolina
Lincoln County
(South Asa Street)

1970s
Woven-Wire
METAL
Security
Fence